

Hampton Beach Area Commission
Meeting Summary – April 21, 2005
Hampton Beach Village Precinct Hall

In Attendance:

Jim Workman, Chairman – Town of Hampton
Fred Rice, Secretary/Treasurer – Town of Hampton
Warren Bambury – Rockingham Regional Planning Commission
Doug DePorter – Designee, NH Department of Transportation
Sandrine Thibault – Designee, Office of Energy and Planning
Skip Windemiller – Hampton Beach Village District
Johanna Lyon – Designee, NH DRED

Absent:

Tom Higgins – Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Rep. Michael O’Neil – Hampton Beach Village District
John Harwood – Town Planner, Town of Hampton (Administrative)

Chairman Jim Workman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Mr. Workman identified the members present.

I. Old Business

1. Earth, Sea, and Space Museum Mr. Bambury reported on the subcommittee’s meeting with the Earth, Sea and Space Museum . Crystal Kent is in the process of gathering the proper information before taking their proposal to the state. Mr. Windemiller commented that we have offered to assist further in their preparation. Mr. Rice stated that the overall concept that the ESS Museum group is working on is very close to the one the commission has been discussing for the past year, and also indicates that the group has already done a lot of homework on the project.

2. Webb Management Services Mr. Workman asked for comments on the proposal from Webb Management Services to develop a needs assessment and a business plan for Hampton Beach. Mr. Rice commented that much of their proposal appeared to be a duplication of work already performed by Fay, Spofford & Thorndike. Mr. Workman pointed out that the Webb proposal was focused more at art centers, pocket parks, and the like, as opposed to overall infrastructure.

➤ Further discussion on this item will take place at the next meeting.

3. Route 1A Bridge Members had been directed to bring ideas to this meeting for discussion regarding features that should be included in the planning for the new bridge. Mr. DePorter proposed that the design should include a high arch to clear boating traffic, four traffic lanes, and possibly different designs and paint colors. Mr. Bambury pointed out that the state has \$8 million earmarked for the bridge replacement, whereas the Regional Planning Commission estimates that the cost of replacement will be closer to \$30 million. Ms. Lyon asked if a tunnel had been considered as an alternative, and whether it would be less expensive. She pointed out that a tunnel might help to alleviate traffic problems at the approaches. Mr. Windemiller restated his preference that the design should be as unique as possible, such as the “wavy” bridge he had previously mentioned, in order to establish the bridge as a landmark. Mr. Rice stated his agreement with the features proposed by Mr. DePorter. Ms. Lyon MOTIONED that Mr. Workman send a letter to Transportation commissioner Murray conveying the commissions input on the bridge design. Mr. Rice SECONDED; motion CARRIES.

➤ Mr. Workman will send a letter to Commissioner Murray.

4. HBAC Grants Mr. Workman has requested guidance from town counsel regarding solicitation of grants for the implementation of the Hampton Beach Master Plan.

➤ Mr. Workman will advise when guidance is received.

5. Subcommittee Review Standards – Suggestions for review with local boards. At the March meeting, members were asked to develop suggestions for discussion items. Mr. Windemiller started by proposing the following:
- a. Ocean Boulevard development: A requirement should be adopted for only commercial development on the first floor, in order to help preserve boardwalk foot traffic and the tourist trade.
 - b. Greenspace and landscaping: Boards should require specific details on the type and cost of exterior landscape features, in order to ensure a high “curb appeal.”
 - c. Residential districts: Should be laid out and developed in accordance with FAR ratios, elevations, etc., to help preserve their identity and character.
 - d. Nonconforming uses: Efforts should be made over time to eliminate nonconforming uses. The rationale for this is that in the 70s, it was permitted to build to the lot line, provided there was a 1-hour firewall there. No on-site parking was required if the building was within 300 feet of public parking. In the 80s, the setback was changed to 40 feet, and on-site parking was required. As a result of these changes, 90% of all beach properties are nonconforming.
 - e. Wetlands: Approvals are now granted on a parcel by parcel basis, with no uniformity. A single line should be established along the marsh to delineate the limit of development. This would allow a roadway or walk to be built along that edge.
 - f. Signage: All signage should be standardized to improve the overall appearance of the beach area.
 - g. Parking lots: All parking lots should be evaluated to determine porosity and drainage. The increase in paved lots has increased surface runoff into the marsh.
 - h. Density: FAR ratios should be applied everywhere.

Ms. Thibault suggested that the best way to accomplish these revisions would be to change the zoning ordinances. She pointed out that the commission’s charter allows for such design guidelines to be proposed, and suggested that a review of the Beach Commission’s duties and powers with the ZBA and Planning Board might be a good first step. Mr. Windemiller pointed out that there was a significant difference between the Cecil Group’s version of the Master Plan and the FSP Visioning document. Mr. Rice suggested that different tracks be taken with each board - development of new zoning ordinances with the Planning Board, vs. establishing with the ZBA a better sequence for reviewing applications.

II. Any Other Business

1. Ms. Lyon suggested that the Commission should develop a mission statement in order to further define its goals and aims. The members concurred.
 - Ms. Lyon will draft a mission statement and e-mail it to the members for review and comment.
2. Mr. Bambury asked what standards the ZBA applies when considering whether to grant a variance. Mr. Workman explained the five criteria.
3. Mr. Bambury suggested that the RPC be asked to assist in any planning efforts of the commission. Mr. Rice added that we should also ask other agencies, as needed. The members concurred.
4. Ms. Lyon asked who would fill the Vice Chair seat since Ms. McLean had left the commission. Mr. Workman indicated that the Vice Chair position should go to the DRED representative in order to keep the proper balance between local and state office holders. The members concurred.
5. Mr. Workman advised the members that the June, 2005 meeting will be held at the Hampton Town Hall, and that the commission will be the guests of the ZBA at its regular meeting.

IV. Review Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2005

Members reviewed the minutes. M. Thibault MOTIONED to accept the March 17, 2005 minutes, as written. Mr. Rice SECONDED; motion CARRIES.

VI. Next meeting and Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 26, 2005 at 6:30 pm** in the Precinct Hall at the Hampton Beach Fire Station.

Ms. Rice MOTIONED to adjourn. Mr. Windemiller SECONDED. Motion CARRIES. Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Submitted by Fred Rice, Secretary.